

# *A Christmas Carol*

By Charles Dickens  
Adapted by Mary Hausch

## Classroom Lessons

Aligned with the Alachua County Schools  
Pacing Guides and NGSSS and CCSS

### Hippodrome Theatre

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Shades of Meaning – Denotative and Connotative Meaning

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**When to use:**

Before or after viewing *A Christmas Carol*

**Benchmarks:**

LA.5.1.6.6 (Shades of meaning)

LA.5.1.7.3 (Essential meaning - paraphrase)

LA.5.1.6.9 (Multiple meaning words)

LACC.5.L.3.4 (Determine meaning of unknown

LA.5.1.6.11 (Using alternate word choices)

words using reference materials)

**Materials:**

Copies of "Shades of Meaning" pg. 1-2

Thesauri (hard copies or online)

**Directions:**

1. Review and discuss denotative and connotative meaning.
2. Review and discuss the assignment directions and the example provided.
3. Direct students to work independently or in pairs/learning groups to complete the remaining items.
4. Share student rewrites of the final excerpt.

Literary Devices in *A Christmas Carol*

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**When to use:**

Before or after viewing *A Christmas Carol*

**Benchmarks:**

LA.5.2.1.7/LACC.5.L.3.5/LACC.5.RL.2.4 (Identifying Figurative Language)

LA.5.5.2.2 (Oral Presentations)

**Materials:**

Copies of "Literary Devices in *A Christmas Carol*"

Poster board, glue, paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, magazines, other materials for creating a collage.

**Directions:**

1. Review literary devices and figurative language; review metaphor, simile, personification.
2. Direct students to identify and write down the literary devices on the second page
3. Direct students to form groups of 3-4 and to select one of the examples from the second page.
4. Direct students to create a poster depicting the example they selected.
5. Each group will present their poster for the class.

Words to Own – Crossword Puzzle

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**When to use:**

After viewing *A Christmas Carol*

**Benchmarks:**

LA.5.1.6.1 (New vocabulary)

LA.4.4.2.1 (Summarize)

LA.5.1.6.5/LACC.5.L.3.4 (Relate unknown to known words)

\*Vocabulary words from Unit 3, Week 4: brimming, gusted, etc.

**Materials:**

Copies of "Words to Own Crossword" pg. 1-2

\*Students could use previous work on these words for reference

**Directions:**

1. Review assignment directions.
2. Direct students to work independently or in pairs/learning groups to complete the remaining items.

## A Closer Look – Evaluating Purpose

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**When to use:**

After viewing *A Christmas Carol*

**Benchmarks:**

LA.5.1.7.2/LACC.K12.R.2 (Author purpose)

LACC.5.RL.2.6 (Describe how a speaker's POV influences how events are described)

**Materials:**

Copies of "A Closer Look – Evaluating purpose"

**Directions:**

1. Review and discuss author purpose, background info and example item "entertain."
2. Direct students to work independently or in pairs/learning groups to complete the remaining items.
3. Discuss student responses and primary and secondary author purposes.

## Character Objectives – Goals and tactics

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**When to use:**

After viewing *A Christmas Carol*

**Benchmarks:**

LA 5.1.7.4 (Cause and effect)

LA 5.2.1.2 (Character Development)

**Materials:**

Copies of the "Character Objectives" packet

**Directions:**

1. Review the terms Objective and Tactics.
2. Discuss possible objectives for characters in *A Christmas Carol* using the example provided on page two and sharing personal objectives and tactics
3. Have students complete page two independently.
4. Discuss the answers students came up with for character objectives.
5. Have students write their own objective and tactics for reaching that objective on the third page.

## Themes and Image Theatre

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**When to use:**



After viewing *A Christmas Carol* or reading the script or story

**Benchmarks:**

LA.5.1.7.6 (Identifying Themes)

LA.5.2.1.2 (Understanding elements of plot – Including theme)

LA.5.2.1.4 (Use Details from text to explain the theme)

LACC.5.RL.1.2 (Use Details from text to explain the theme, including how characters respond to challenges)

TH.5.C.1.1 (Devise an original performance based on theme)

**Materials:**

*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

\* Optional: *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* by Augusto Boal (for a description of image theatre)

**Directions:**

See the Teacher Directions page.

Appendix – General Discussion Questions & Vocab

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**When to use:**

Before and after viewing or reading *A Christmas Carol*

# Shades of Meaning

Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in 1843. Since then, many writers have adapted his story for the stage and screen. The challenge for these writers is to remain true to the story, even when words are changed. Writers who adapt a novel for the stage must pay close attention to both the denotative and connotative meanings of words.

**Denotative meaning** – the literal or functional meaning of a word

**Connotative meaning** – the feelings and thoughts associated with a word

## Example:

Martha told a *funny* joke. Martha told a *silly* joke. Martha told a *witty* joke.

In these sentences, *silly* and *witty* have similar denotative meanings as *funny*. However, the connotative meaning of *silly* might make you think that the joke was also childish or simple. Using the word *witty* might make you think the joke was both funny and smart.

**DIRECTIONS:** Using context clues and a thesaurus, write a synonym to replace each of the bolded words in the following excerpt from Hausch’s adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. Be sure to pay close attention to connotative meanings. The first one has been completed for you.

This is part of Marley’s description of Scrooge:

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone. Scrooge! A squeezing, wrenching, **grasping**, scraping, clutching, **covetous** old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, secret, **self-contained**, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his **old** features, nipped his pointed nose, **shriveled** his cheek, stiffened his gait, made his eyes red, his thin lips blue, and spoke out shrewdly in his **grating** voice.

Ex. **grasping:** grabbing

3. **old:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. **covetous:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. **shriveled:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **self-contained:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. **grating:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Shades of Meaning - pg. 2

**DIRECTIONS:** Using context clues and a thesaurus, write phrases to replace each of the bolded phrases in the following excerpt from Hausch's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. Be sure to pay close attention to connotative meanings.

In this scene, the Solicitor is trying to get Scrooge to donate to the poor:

At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, it is **more than usually desirable** that we should make some **slight provision** for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of **common necessities**, hundreds...hundreds of thousands are in want of common comfort, sir.

6. **more than usually desirable:** \_\_\_\_\_

7. **slight provision:** \_\_\_\_\_

8. **common necessities:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the excerpt below; look-up unknown words. Then rewrite the excerpt. Do your best to communicate the same meanings and feelings, but with your own words.

In this scene, the Solicitor explains why the holiday season is an especially important time of year to help others:

A few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. I choose this time, because it is a time above all others, when want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?

9 & 10. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Literary Devices in A Christmas Carol

## An Art-based Teacher-led Activity

### Preparation:

1. Review with students the three literary devices defined below. Review the instructions and example on the following worksheet, "Literary Devices in A Christmas Carol."
2. Instruct students to complete the worksheet on their own.
3. Grade and return or conduct a group discussion of the completed worksheets.

### Art Activity:

4. Divide students into groups of 3-4. Instruct each group to select one of the examples of literary devices from the worksheet to illustrate. Instruct students to illustrate the chosen quote on poster paper using pens, markers and other materials. The illustrations should represent the literal meaning of the words in the selected quote. For example, if the quote is, "The door cried", the group might draw a door with tears running down it. Write the quote on the poster and label the poster with the appropriate literary device. (Following the above example, the door cried would be entitled "Personification.")
5. Invite each group to present its poster to the class.

Certain literary devices help add descriptions and images to text; they bring the text alive by encouraging the reader or listener to use their imagination.

### Literary Devices:

- **Metaphor:** A word or expression which denotes one kind of thing or action is applied to a distinctly different thing or action.  
Example: "My love is a rose."
- **Simile:** A comparison between two distinctly different things using the words "like" or "as."  
Example: "This week was like a rollercoaster."
- **Personification:** Giving life or human attributes (such as feelings) to inanimate objects  
Example: "The door cried."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Literary Devices in A Christmas Carol - pg. 2

Certain literary devices help add descriptions and images to text; they bring the text alive by encouraging the reader or listener to use their imagination.

## Literary Devices:

- **Metaphor:** A word or expression which denotes one kind of thing or action is applied to a distinctly different thing or action. Example: "My love is a rose."
- **Simile:** A comparison between two distinctly different things using the words "like" or "as." Example: "This week was like a rollercoaster."
- **Personification:** Giving life or human attributes (such as feelings) to inanimate objects. Example: "The door cried."

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following excerpts from Mary Hausch's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. Each excerpt contains at least one literary device: a metaphor, simile or personification.

1. Underline each group of words that creates the literary device.
2. Then write in the blank below whether the literary device is a metaphor, simile, or personification. For excerpts with more than one literary device, name the device used in the order that it appears in the excerpt.

**Example: There is one example of a literary device in this excerpt.**

**MARLEY:** You see, I am dead. Oh, there is no doubt whatever about that.

I am as dead as a doornail.

Literary Device: simile

**Excerpt #1. There are two examples of literary devices in this excerpt.**

**MARLEY:** The fog and darkness are thickening. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell always peeps slyly down at Scrooge out of a Gothic window in the wall, is now invisible. Now strikes the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards, as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there.

1<sup>st</sup> Literary Device: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Literary Device: \_\_\_\_\_



## Literary Devices in A Christmas Carol - pg. 3

### **Excerpt #2. There is one example of a literary device in this excerpt.**

**FAN:** Dear, dear brother. I have come to bring you home.

**SCROOGE AS A BOY:** Home for good and all, home for ever and ever?

**FAN:** Yes! Father is so much kinder than he used to be; that home is like Heaven!

**Literary Device:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Excerpt #3. There is one example of a literary device in this excerpt.**

**CRATCHIT:** Oh dear! Have you all missed me so much, then? What a family. I am truly blessed. Today I went upstairs to see my beloved Tim for the last time. Like an angel, he was...I kissed his little face and found some peace.

**Literary Device:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Excerpt #4. There are four examples of literary devices in this excerpt.**

**SCROOGE:** I don't know what to do! I'm as light as a feather. I am as happy as an angel. I am as merry as a schoolboy. A merry Christmas to everyone! A Happy New Year to the world! I don't even know what day it is. I don't know how long I've been amongst the spirits. I don't know anything. I'm quite a baby.

**1<sup>st</sup> Literary Device:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2<sup>nd</sup> Literary Device:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3<sup>rd</sup> Literary Device:** \_\_\_\_\_

**4<sup>th</sup> Literary Device:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Excerpt #5. There is one example of a literary device in this excerpt.**

**ALL:** Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to Mr. Scrooge.

**MRS. CRATCHIT:** All the same, he is an ogre and you know it, Bob.

Literary Device: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Words to Own Crossword

**DIRECTIONS:** Use your knowledge of these vocabulary words to apply them to sentences about *A Christmas Carol*. Write the word that best completes each sentence on the lines provided. Then write the word in the puzzle on the next page.

brimming

scorching

gnarled

gusted

parched

progress

landscape

scrawny

### ACROSS:

1. When Scrooge traveled to the past, he saw the Fezziwigs. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig were kind and lively people; they were \_\_\_\_\_ with joy on Christmas Day.
2. Bob took a sip of hot tea to soothe his dry lips which had become \_\_\_\_\_ from the cold winter wind.
3. After the visits from the three ghosts, Scrooge set out across the snowy London \_\_\_\_\_ to spread Christmas cheer.
4. People who did not know Tiny Tim may have only thought of him as a sick and \_\_\_\_\_ little boy, but the Cratchit family knew that he was full of hope and love.

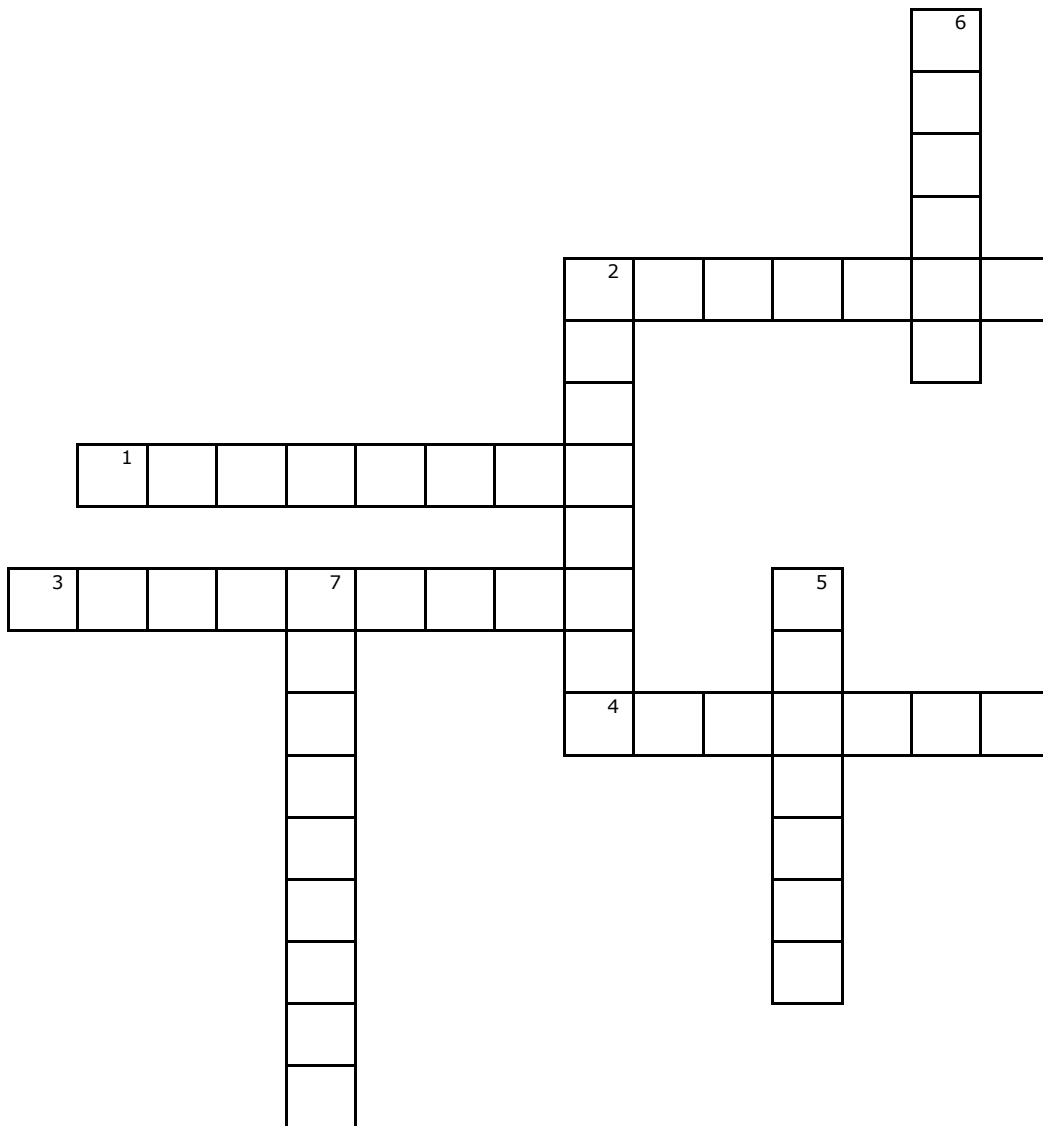
### DOWN:

2. At the end of the play, Marley tells the audience that Scrooge didn't just make \_\_\_\_\_ toward becoming a better person, he did become a good man and a good friend.
5. Fred wished Scrooge a Merry Christmas, but Scrooge just turned his mean and \_\_\_\_\_ face to Fred and said, "Bah! Humbug!"
6. An icy wind \_\_\_\_\_ down the narrow streets.
7. After walking home from work in the cold, Martha couldn't wait to warm her hands by the \_\_\_\_\_ heat of the fire.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Words to Own Crossword - pg. 2



**Your turn!** Choose any two words from the puzzle and write your own original sentences using each word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# A Closer Look - Evaluating Purpose

## Why does an author write a particular story?

What inspires the creation of characters, theme, and plot? What is the author trying to get the reader to think, do, or feel after reading the text? Sometimes knowing about the author's life helps answer these questions.

### Background on Charles Dickens, the author of *A Christmas Carol*:

When Charles Dickens was a child, his father went to prison for debt. Charles had to go to work to help support his family when he was only twelve years old. He never wrote directly about his personal experience with poverty, but he did write about many struggling poor families, like the Cratchits in *A Christmas Carol*.

**DIRECTIONS:** Use the chart below to evaluate *A Christmas Carol* by author purpose. Write *yes* or *no* in the second column, and explain your answer in the third column. The first one is done for you.

Purpose	Yes or No?	Why do you think so? Explain your answer using examples from the story.
Entertain	Yes	1. It's a work of fiction, and most fiction is written to entertain. 2. It tells a story about imaginary people. 3. I think the author wanted people to enjoy the story, because it had funny parts.
Inform		
Persuade		

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Character Objectives

In literature and plays, each character has an objective. This means that there is something each character desires or wants. The character's journey to achieve that objective draws the audience into the story. There are many different types of objectives.

- A personal achievement—"I want to get good grades in school."
- A physical object—"I want to reach the cookie jar on the top shelf."
- An emotional goal—"I want to make my mom proud."

## Words to know:

**Objective:** Something a character in a play or story strives to achieve, it can be physical, personal or emotional. It is something the character wants or desires.

**Tactics:** The tools a character uses to achieve his or her objective. The steps the character takes to be successful.

**DIRECTIONS:** Choose three characters and write an objective (or something the character **wants**) for each one. Keep in mind that the objective may change over the course of the play. Then write down the character's tactic used (steps he/she takes) to reach that objective. Finally, decide whether the character succeeds or fails in reaching that objective.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Character Objectives pg. 2



Example:

Character: Scrooge

Objective: To be rich

Tactic: Keeping his money to himself, not giving to the poor.

Succeeds or Fails: He does make a lot of money at the beginning, but that comes at a personal cost. In the end he learns to share.

1) Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Tactic: \_\_\_\_\_

Succeeds or Fails: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Tactic: \_\_\_\_\_

Succeeds or Fails: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Tactic: \_\_\_\_\_

Succeeds or Fails: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Character Objectives pg. 3

Now it's your turn! Think about a personal objective that you have in life; it can be a short-term objective or a long-term objective. Write one sentence to describe your objective. Then write a paragraph detailing the tactics that you will use to reach that objective.

**Objective:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Tactics:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# Themes and Image Theatre

## A Teacher-led Activity

There are many themes present in *A Christmas Carol*. The story has a definite moral teaching that is explored through Scrooge's transformation from a rude, insensitive curmudgeon to a kind, generous, and caring person.

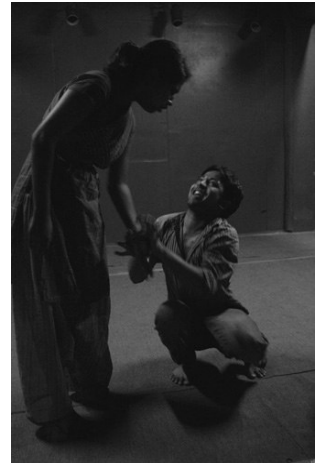
**Theme:** A reoccurring or unifying idea present in a work of art or literature, which often explores timeless and universal ideals.

**Image Theatre:** The use of still images to explore abstract concepts such as relationships, emotions, and realistic situations (in the case themes). These images are created physically with participants' bodies used like statues to create a sculpture or "stage picture," much like an image on a paper.

**Stage picture:** The onstage arrangement of performers and scenic elements (lighting, props, furniture, etc.) that creates an image to help communicate the narrative or meaning of the play.

### Directions for the teacher:

- 1) With the class, brainstorm a list of possible themes in *A Christmas Carol*.
- 2) Divide the class into small groups (3-5).
- 3) Instruct each group to select one theme from the list to create a stage picture. Once the theme has been selected, each group will form a physical image that represents that theme. All members of the group can be part of the image or one person can be selected to be the "sculptor" and sculpt the group members into a stage picture.
- 4) Instruct each group to present its stage picture to the class. As each group presents its stage picture, lead the class through a discussion to identify each theme represented and talk about other ideas for stage pictures that could depict the chosen theme.
  - Variation 1: For theme images that depict the negative, i.e., greed or selfishness, the class may explore and create an opposite, ideal image. Both images may be brought to life, perhaps by exploring how the first image of the 'real' can be transformed into the second, 'ideal' image.
  - Variation 2: The class can play with adding more than one still image together to create a larger picture.





# A Christmas Carol

## Discussion Questions

*A Christmas Carol* was originally written in 1843 and has since been adapted into countless plays, movies, children's books, cartoons, etc. Here at the Hippodrome we have produced *A Christmas Carol* every year for the past 34 years. Why do you think this story stands the test of time? Why do you think this story is important to tell?

Why is Mr. Fezziwig, a fairly small role in the play, such an important part of Scrooge's life?

Each ghost that visits Scrooge behaves and looks very differently, why is this? What does each ghost symbolize to Scrooge? Do they symbolize something else to you?

Which ghost do you think had the greatest effect on Scrooge? Why?



**Bah Humbug!**

Why does Charles Dickens use ghosts in the story at all? What do they represent?

Charles Dickens was very thoughtful in selecting his characters' names. Why did he name his character Ebenezer Scrooge? When you hear the name Scrooge does it evoke an emotion? Why did he use the name Cratchit, Fezziwig or Belle?

*A Christmas Carol* can be considered a "morality tale," a story intended to teach readers or viewers a lesson about how to be a better person. What is the lesson Scrooge learns in *A Christmas Carol*? What other stories do you know that teach us how to be better people? What are the morals or lessons taught by those stories?

The Grinch can be considered the twentieth century Scrooge. How do the two characters compare? Are their stories similar? Do they share the same message and themes? How are the two stories different?

# A Christmas Carol

## Vocabulary

**Ali Baba:** Scrooge, when visiting his younger self, mentions Ali Baba as a favorite childhood story. Ali Baba is a fictional character from medieval Arabic literature.

**Almshouses:** Charitable housing provided to enable people (typically elderly people who can no longer work to earn enough to pay rent) to live in a particular community.

**Apparition:** Another word to describe a ghost. When Marley appears before Scrooge, Scrooge uses this word to describe Marley's sudden, frightening appearance.

**Benevolence:** A disposition to do good deeds; generous. Marley tells Scrooge that he needed to be benevolent in life, instead of greedy and miserly.

**Bob:** Slang word for a shilling, a unit of currency in England during the Victorian era. It is worth approximately 12 pennies.

**Christmas Pudding:** A traditional English dessert served on Christmas day made of steamed fruits, nuts, suet (raw mutton fat), spices and a little bit of brandy. Also called plum pudding for its dark color.

**Covetous:** An intense desire for wealth and possessions. Marley uses this word to describe the greedy Scrooge.

**Dowry:** This refers to the money, goods or estate that a wife would bring to her husband when they got married. When Belle refers to herself as "dowerless" girl, she is indicating that she doesn't have the wealth to bring to a marriage, and Scrooge would never choose a dowerless girl.

**Executor:** A person responsible for the money and property of another person who has died, as in the 'executor of a will'. Scrooge was the executor of Marley's money.

**Farthing, Shilling, Crown, Sixpence:** These are all units of currency in Great Britain during the early to mid-1800s.

**Fettered:** A fetter is a chain or shackle placed around the feet. This is referring to Marley being shackled with the chain he forged in life.

**Flamboyant:** A showy or dashing display. Marley's entrance at the beginning of the play includes flashy lights, sound effects, etc., a grand entrance.

**Forbearance:** Forgiveness. The word is used by Marley as one of the traits he lacked while alive; i.e., he needed to be more forgiving and lenient.

**Girded:** Encircled with a flexible band, or a chain; belted. Marley says that the chain around his body was girded by his deeds while alive.

**Humbug:** The way Scrooge uses "humbug" is referring to nonsense or rubbish.

**Incessant:** Continuing without interruption. Marley tells Scrooge that the pain of wandering as a ghost is incessant.

**"Jack Robinson":** The phrase means a very short span of time, like 'lickety' split'. Mr. Fezziwig says to the young Scrooge: "Let's have the shutters up before a man can say 'Jack Robinson'!"

**Millinery:** Martha works in the millinery business which means she makes and sews hats.



**Morose:** Having a sullen or gloomy disposition. Fred tells Scrooge that he is rich, and therefore has no reason to be morose.

**Odious:** This word means deserving of hatred; horrible. Mrs. Cratchit calls Scrooge odious and refuses to drink his health during Christmas dinner.

**Ogre:** A hideous giant from fairytales (i.e. Shrek), or a dreaded, unlikable person. The Cratchit children think Scrooge is an ogre because he is so stingy and mean.

**Palpable:** Capable of being touched or felt. Bob Cratchit uses this word to describe the dense, sooty air of Victorian London which was dirty from coal burning stoves and machines.

**Phantom:** A ghost or other being with no physical body. Marley uses this word to describe himself to the audience.

**Precepts:** A rule, commandment or required action. The Ghost of Christmas Past tells Scrooge that he must go to all the places where people are suffering because that is his precept.

**Poor Law and Union Workhouses:** The New Poor Law of 1834; this law established a system of regional workhouses for debtors. The workhouses were awful places – poorly ventilated and overcrowded; the guards were often brutal and many poor people would rather die than go to a workhouse.

**Reclamation:** The act of getting something back. The Ghost of Christmas Past refers to reclaiming Scrooge's soul before it is too late, and he becomes like Marley.

**Robinson Crusoe:** A book written in 1719 by Daniel Defoe, telling the story of the lone survivor of a shipwreck who lives on an island with a native companion he calls "Friday."

**Situation:** In the context of *A Christmas Carol*, situation is used to mean a job or form of employment.

**Specter:** Another word for ghost, a specter is a visible disembodied spirit. Scrooge uses this word when talking to the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come, who shows Scrooge the terrible things that will happen if he does not change his life.

**Squalling:** A squall is a violent wind, often associated with rain or snow. Scrooge uses this word to describe the loud, tear-filled wailing of a baby.

**"Straight from the bakers":** The Cratchits, like many poor people of 19<sup>th</sup> century London, had no oven in their home, only a fire place. Mrs. Cratchit had to pay the baker to cook her goose.



**Treadmill:** A Victorian torture device, like a giant hamster wheel for humans. Convicts were required to walk on the wheel for six hours at a time taking large steps – or risk having their foot crushed by the wheel.

